

## MAINE BUREAU OF HEALTH

### WARNING About Eating Freshwater Fish

Warning: Mercury in Maine freshwater fish may harm the babies of pregnant and nursing mothers, and young children.

### SAFE EATING GUIDELINES

Pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, and children under age 8 **SHOULD NOT EAT** any freshwater fish from Maine's inland waters. Except, for brook trout and landlocked salmon, 1 meal per month is safe.

All other adults and children older than 8 **CAN EAT** 2 freshwater fish meals per month. For brook trout and landlocked salmon, the limit is 1 meal per week.

It's hard to believe that fish that looks, smells, and tastes fine may not be safe to eat. But the truth is that fish in Maine lakes, ponds, and rivers have mercury in them. Other states have this problem too. Mercury in the air settles into the waters. It then builds up in fish. For this reason, older fish have higher levels of mercury than younger fish. Fish (like pickerel and bass) that eat other fish have the highest mercury levels.

Small amounts of mercury can harm a brain starting to form or grow. That is why unborn and nursing babies, and young children are most at risk. Too much mercury can affect behavior and learning. Mercury can harm older children and adults, but it takes larger amounts. It may cause numbness in hands and feet or changes in vision. The Safe Eating Guidelines identify limits to protect everyone.

See <http://www.maine.gov/dhs/ehu/fish/2KFCA.shtml>

Warning: Some Maine waters are polluted, requiring additional limits to eating fish.

Fish caught in some Maine waters have high levels of PCBs, Dioxins or DDT in them. These chemicals can cause cancer and other health effects. The Bureau of Health recommends additional fish consumption limits on the waters listed below. Remember to check the mercury guidelines. If the water you are fishing is listed below, check the mercury guideline above and follow the most limiting guidelines.

## SAFE EATING GUIDELINES

Androscoggin River Gilead to Merrymeeting Bay:-----6-12 fish meals a year.  
Dennys River Meddybemps Lake to Dead Stream:-----1-2 fish meals a month.  
Green Pond, Chapman Pit, & Greenlaw Brook  
(Limestone):-----Do not eat any fish from these waters.  
Little Madawaska River & tributaries  
(Madwaska Dam to Grimes Mill Road):-----Do not eat any fish from these waters.  
Kennebec River Augusta to the Chops:-----Do not eat any fish from these waters.  
Shawmut Dam in Fairfield to Augusta:-----5 trout meals a year, 1-2 bass meals a month.  
Madison to Fairfield: -----1-2 fish meals a month.  
Meduxnekeag River: ----- 2 fish meals a month.  
North Branch Presque Isle River-----2 fish meals a month.  
Penobscot River below Lincoln:-----1-2 fish meals a month  
Prestile Stream:-----1 fish meal a month.  
Red Brook in Scarborough: ----- 6 fish meals a year.  
Salmon Falls River below Berwick: -----6-12 fish meals a year.  
Sebasticook River (East Branch, West Branch & Main Stem)  
(Corinna/Hartland to Winslow):-----2 fish meals a month.